

**Testimony Regarding Raised House Bill # 7027**  
***An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending***  
***June Thirtieth 2019, and Making Appropriations Therefor***  
**Presented to the State of Connecticut General Assembly, Appropriations Committee**  
**Thursday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2017**

My name is Carrie Dyer and I am the Chief Operating Officer of Reliance Health in Norwich, a private, non-profit organization providing mental health services throughout Eastern Connecticut. In conjunction with the Connecticut Departments of Mental Health and Addiction Services and Developmental Services, we provide opportunities to individuals who lack the financial means to obtain such services without the benefit of private health insurance coverage.

Our programs vary as widely as the people we serve. We offer shelter and supportive housing, veterans outreach, educational and employment coaching, daily living skills...the things that you and I, given our health, take for granted. In my 22 years of employment at Reliance Health, I have taken great pride in the relationships that we have formed and the evolution of our services. Despite our lean budget and meager pay scale, I have been continuously impressed by our organization's creativity, optimism, genuine compassion, and vigilance. Those qualities, however, have ultimately shortchanged our communities and our system as a whole. While our budgets atrophy year after year due to lack of adjustments for inflation, we nimbly reallocate and rearrange and create the false impression that we can continue down this dangerous path. Meanwhile, the financial discrepancies between non-profit and state funded services grow. We, as a state, can no longer provide a two-tiered system of care by underfunded non-profits and richly funded, redundant services offered by state-run organizations.

The State of Connecticut is fortunate to have many non-profit providers who are willing and able to fulfill the mission of meeting the health needs of our most vulnerable neighbors. Non-profits generally operate with budgets roughly 50% less than their state-operated counterparts. Transitioning direct service provision to the non-profit sector with **acclimated funding levels** and eliminating the duplicative services offered by state-run organizations is a cost efficient and responsible budgeting decision. Non-profit organizations are resourceful, innovative, and economical and we are prepared for the next phase of full service provision on behalf of the State of Connecticut.

Thank you for your time.